

Weaponizing Yoga

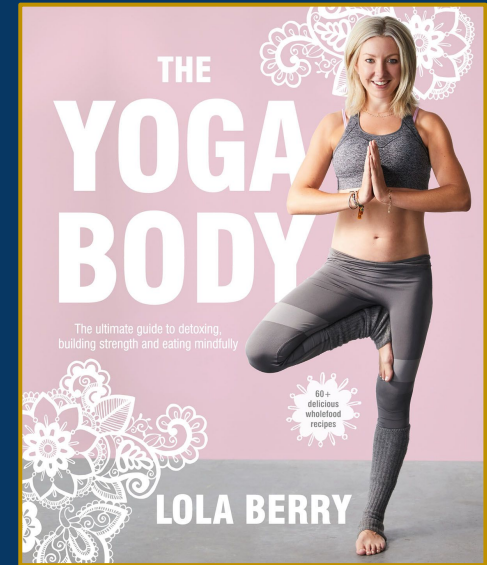
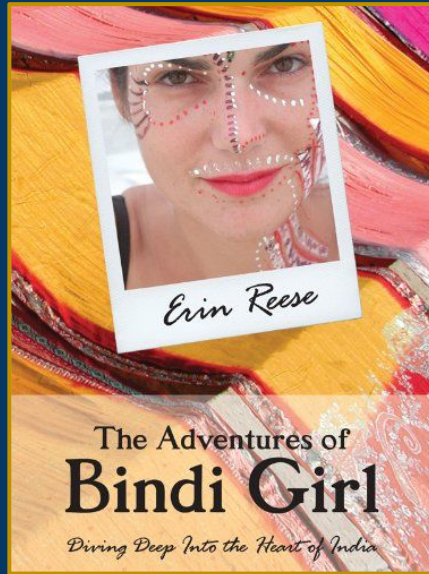
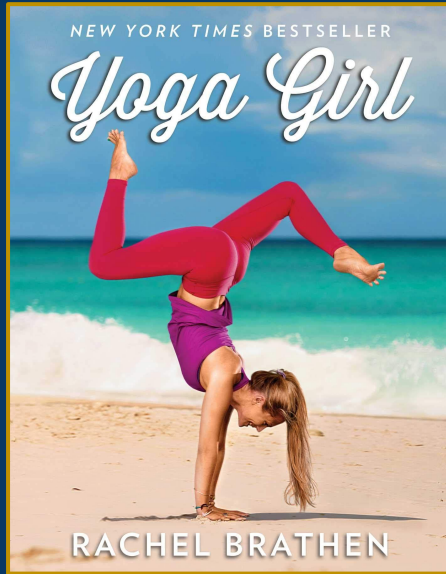
By Sheena Sood

Whiteness, Appropriation & the Body

Yoga-Inspired Clothing Company *Spiritual Gangster*
promotes “high-vibrational living”



Whiteness, Appropriation & the Body



Corporate Yoga

CORPORATE YOGA Best Asanas And Their Benefits



Patrick 
@PatJD

EVERY COMPANY: We'd like to promote mental health in the workplace.

EMPLOYEES: How about hiring more people so we feel less pressured & increase our pay so we can keep up with the spiraling cost of living so we're not so stressed out.

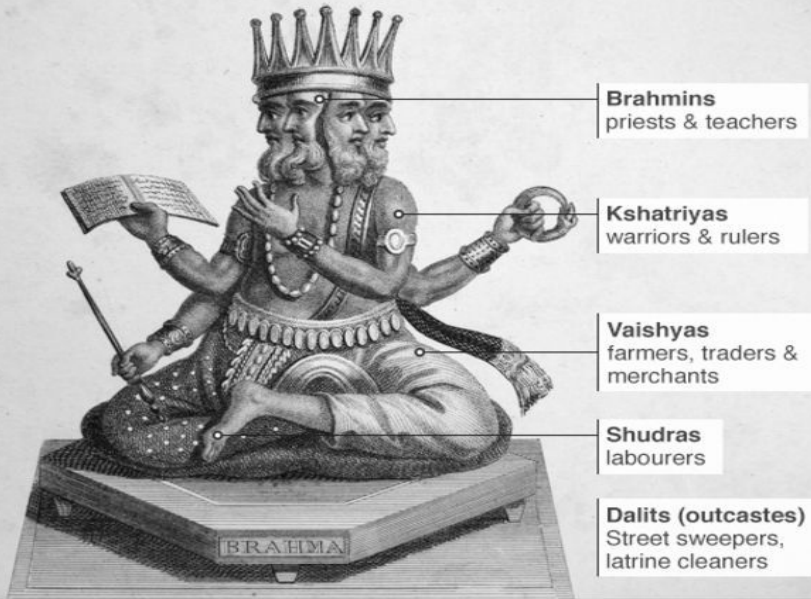
EVERY COMPANY: No not like that. Try Yoga.

3:43 AM - 20 Mar 2019



The Hindu Caste System

Brahma and the origins of caste



Source: Alamy

BBC

A caste system divides people into social groups (castes) where assignments of rights and duties are determined by birth, fixed and hereditary.

- How has caste been addressed in mainstream yoga classes and trainings?
- Can you think of a yogic code or term that likely carries casteist meaning?

Yoga and Casteism



“Young Indian Hindu Brahmins training to be priests perform yoga on a ghat on the Ganges River, a holy river that runs through Varanasi, India.” Historically, Brahmins were the only caste permitted to study/speak Sanskrit and practice yoga.

- **How does this image connect to the colonization of yoga?**

(April 2014, Photo by Kevin Frayer/Getty Images)



**Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses
United Nations General Assembly and introduces resolution calling for an
International Yoga Day holiday to honor “India’s timeless tradition” (Sept 2014)**

Yoga & Ethnonationalism



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on International Yoga Day: In September 2015, Modi submitted a resolution to the United Nations to recognize yoga as an “ancient Indian practice, hence the evolution of this holiday. Modi has long been accused of discriminating against India’s non-Hindu minorities, particularly Muslims, and of having a Hindu nationalist agenda.

- **How do the images in this group relate to the colonization of yoga and ethnonationalism?**

Yoga & Militarism



Retired US Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Jannell MacAulay travels the globe educating senior military leaders about the benefits of yoga/mindfulness training. PC: Jeff Wojtaszek



Sadhguru of the Isha Foundation leads Indian Armed Forces (IAF) soldiers in yoga training on International Yoga Day as part of strength training regimen for “combat readiness” PC: Isha Foundation

Yoga and Ethnonationalism



Jewish youth participating in Birthright Israel's 10-day "mindfulness & yoga" trip to occupied Palestine (Israel). Millions of Palestinian refugees and their families are banned from visiting their occupied homeland. (PC: Hillel International)



An ad for Tourist Israel's **Masada Sunrise Yoga** tour: visitors to occupied Palestine climb Mt. Masada for sunrise yoga & swim in the Dead Sea, sites that Palestinians are excluded from accessing by militarized borders

Yoga & Militarism

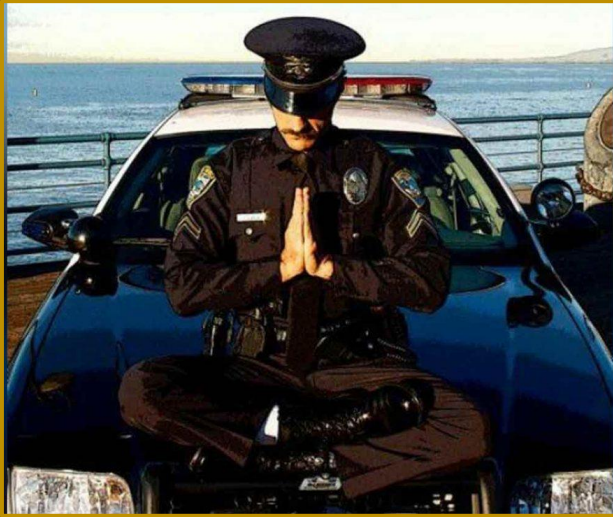


Karen Zivan's "Guns and Poses" course at the Petach Tikva army base. PC: Masa L'Koach



IDF soldier Mor Gutwillig doing yoga on a Tel Aviv street in occupied Palestine. PC: Robert Sturman

Yoga & Policing



“San Leandro (California) Dept. Finds Powerful Way to Thwart Police Brutality by Teaching Cops Yoga”

What are the ethical stakes of yoga & mindfulness programs for police officers & soldiers in the Israeli Defense Force, Indian Armed Forces, and U.S. Army/Air Force?



Corporal Spencer Chow of Austin Police Association blogs, “How Yoga Changed One Officer’s Life”